

and report of this Party is now awaited with interest, as this golden langur may be a species entirely new to science.

OATING P.O.,
ASSAM,
August 11, 1955.

E. P. GEE

[We understand from Mr. Khajuria of the Zoological Survey of India that his description of this new species of langur, which he has named *Presbytis geei*, will shortly be published in *Annals and Magazine of Natural History*—Eds.]

2. MONKEYS AND PANTHER

With reference to the first Miscellaneous Note in Volume 52, No. 4, the following extract from an account in my diary of what appears to be another good example of 'mass hysteria' amongst langurs in the presence of panther may be of interest to readers of the *Journal*. It refers to an incident near Tanakpur which I recorded in November 1939.

Late one afternoon I was sauntering quietly down a jungle path near the forest edge. Suddenly I froze in my tracks, for meandering towards me was a really fine chital stag. I hadn't the slightest wish to shoot him; rather did I feel like bursting into laughter for he was mooning along the path seemingly without a care in the world, occasionally inclining his aristocratic head to one side or the other as if he were aware of its beauty; occasionally he nuzzled a strand of grass leaning across his path. He was not forty yards away, yet quite oblivious of my presence and so taken up with his dreaming that he performed a little sideways dance, lowered his head in mock battle, and then walked on as nonchalantly as before. His preoccupation was quite ludicrous to see, but it might well have proved his undoing.

Some fifteen yards to his left was a narrow belt of shisham trees, near the summits of which a dozen or so langurs were nibbling the young shoots and watching my movements with but little concern. On the chital's immediate right was a wall of tall thatching grass seven or eight feet high and stretching back some fifty yards to the edge of the sal trees. Without a moment's notice pandemonium broke loose amongst the monkeys. Never was such unbridled panic, and why they forsook the safety of the shisham trees God alone knows. With volleys of grunts, squeals, and frenzied chatterings they burst in all directions like a startled covey of quail, surged across the path and through the tall grass in an effort to reach the main forest. So taken up was I with this amazing stampede that for an instant I forgot the stag. When once more I glanced down the path, he had melted from my ken. But even as I pondered on his disappearance, from out the elephant-grass there burst through the clamour an awe-inspiring sigh. I can only describe it as a sigh, a sigh which was indeed all breath and little noise and yet seemed to shake the air. It was followed (or was it preceded?—in the confusion I forget which)

by the agonized scream of a dying langur. In the excitement of the moment I pushed a little way through the cover in the direction of a tall anthill. Discretion quickly sent me back to the path, for a low growl, too imperative to disregard and too near for comfort, warned me not to interfere.

Much had been enacted before my very eyes, and even more had come to my ears, yet the correct interpretation of those crowded moments probably eludes me. Is it not possible that one of a pair of leopards, from beyond the shisham trees, caused those foolish monkeys to run in terror from his presence while his mate lay ready in the concealing grass? At any rate, I like to think that the chital stag had no place in the violence of that scene; he was far too happy and beautiful.'

HAYBARN,
THURSLEY,
SURREY.

R. S. P. BATES,
Lieut.-Col., I.A. (Retd.).

September 25, 1955.

3. THE BICYCLE TIGER

On a nearby tea estate there have been, recently, two unusual cases of a tiger attacking people on bicycles in daylight. The first occurred some two months ago when a Dispenser of the estate was knocked off his machine by a large tiger which sprang out from the tea which borders the road. He was virtually unhurt, but the cycle tyres were ripped—presumably by the animal's claws.

The second 'assault' took place on 10th September, 1955. The Manager was peacefully riding along a road which borders some abandoned tea, i.e., the bushes have been allowed to grow unpruned and unplucked, when he was startled by a squeal which came from the other side of the road. He stopped to investigate and at the same instant, 'a huge tiger emerged from the abandoned tea and approached me at a crouching run. I pedalled off as fast as I could with the tiger effortlessly keeping pace behind. After going a few yards I began to shout. Then I fell off. I don't remember anything more until I "came round" to see some labourers bending over me. Apparently, on hearing my shouts, they came in my direction and the tiger made off.'

The Manager was also almost unscathed, but the cycle tyres were again ripped by the animal. The only really satisfactory explanation for these two attacks appears to be of a psychological nature. That the tiger harbours a phobia against cycles seems likely—in particular against the admirable products of M/s. Dunlop, Firestone, etc., for in both instances he could have killed both men with very little trouble, yet he seems to have concerned himself solely with the machine. His actions were, apparently, unprovoked as the source of 'the squeal' was not discovered. In the case of the Dispenser, the only sound emanated from himself!